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Delaware Announces Agreement with Mattel to Reduce Lead Paint in Toys

Wilmington, DE - Today, the Delaware Department of Justice announced that it has reached an agreement with Mattel, Inc. and its subsidiary, Fisher-Price, Inc., following a 16-month investigation into the events that led to the voluntary 2007 recall of the company's toys for excessive lead paint. The agreement, involving Attorneys General from 38 states, requires Mattel to strengthen lead standard in its toys and to make a payment of \$12 million to the participating states. Delaware's Consumer Protection Fund will receive \$197,000.

"We are acting to ensure that steps are immediately taken to reduce dangerous levels of lead in toys," stated Timothy Mullaney, Director of the Delaware Department of Justice Fraud and Consumer Protection Division. "This agreement holds manufacturers accountable for practices that put our children at risk."

From August 2, 2007 through October 25, 2007, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission ("CPSC") recalled approximately 2 million Mattel and Fisher-Price toys manufactured in China, alleging that they contained excessive lead in accessible surface coatings. At the time of the recalls, the CPSC standard permitted for lead in accessible surface coatings was 600 parts per million (ppm). Lead levels taken of recalled toys during the course of the states' investigation revealed that they not only exceeded the federal standard but in some instances tested at up to 50,000 ppm.

Today's agreement includes stronger standards for accessible lead in surface coatings and in substrates for toys manufactured after November 30, 2008. Mattel has agreed with the Attorneys General to phase in more stringent standards ahead of the timelines provided by the newly enacted Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which comes into effect in February, 2009. Mattel has also agreed to notify the Attorneys General if it confirms excessive lead in any of its products in violation of today's agreement or in violation of state or federal law and to work with the Attorneys General to remedy such violations.

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